



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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INTERIOR RECOMMENDS WILDLIFE REFUGE ON TOMBIGBEE RIVER PROJECT IN ALABAMA

The establishment of a new wildlife refuge on the west side of the Tombigbee River near Jackson, Alabama, was recommended today by the Department of the Interior.

The new refuge would be known as the Choctaw National Wildlife Refuge. It would consist of approximately 4,250 acres. Its chief value would be for waterfowl management purposes.

The Department's endorsement of the refuge was made in a letter to the House Committee on Public Works recommending the passage of H. R. 8347. This bill authorizes the acquisition of land for the refuge in connection with the Jackson Lock and Dam navigation project on the Tombigbee.

In the letter, Assistant Secretary Ross Leffler said the Fish and Wildlife Service had cooperated with the Corps of Engineers in the preparation of a plan for the development of the wildlife potential of the area. Under H. R. 8347 about 2,000 acres more land would be purchased than is contemplated by the original plan. The cost of the additional land would be about \$120,000. Officials of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife believe that the wildlife benefits will far outweigh the additional costs.

Plans have been formulated with the assistance of the Corps and the Alabama Department of Conservation for the development of a public shooting grounds on the east side of the river. This would be developed by the State of Alabama.

The letter further states that the proposal for a national wildlife refuge and the establishment of State-owned and operated public shooting ground is a good example of cooperative planning for the development of fish and wildlife resources as contemplated in the Wildlife Coordination Act.

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